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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED] 25X1A

DATE: 17 May 1951

FROM: [REDACTED] 25X1A

SUBJECT: A Few Basic Concepts of Soviet World Strategy Which May Bear
on NIE-25

1. A brief review of basic Soviet literature suggests that the following broad principles may have an important bearing on the Kremlin's global strategy.

a. Soviet leaders have persistently professed confidence in the ultimate collapse of capitalism. They seem to visualize this collapse as resulting from the inter-play of various economic and political forces, and apparently feel under no great compulsion to bring it about within any particular period of time.

b. Although doomed to ultimate destruction, capitalism will, throughout its remaining life span, constitute a continuing threat to the Communist world:

"It should not be forgotten that for the time being the revolution has been victorious in only one country. It should not be forgotten that as long as capitalist encirclement exists, so long will the danger of intervention, with all the resultant consequences, exist."
(Stalin - "Problems of Leninism" - 1926)

"It is clear . . . that as long as the capitalist system of world economy exists, the Soviet people must be ready for all contingencies. For the presence of this system signifies the possibility of aggressive hostile actions against our country undertaken by the most frantic among the imperialists."
(Pravda - Discussion of Lenin's "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" - 1946)

c. Because of these dangers, the USSR must move cautiously and not permit itself to be drawn into major conflict with the capitalist world prematurely. It must devise means of "co-existing" with capitalism until revolutionary forces have undermined capitalist power.

"We cannot forget the saying of Lenin to the effect that a great deal in the matter of our construction depends on whether we succeed in delaying war with the capitalist

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countries, which is inevitable but which may be delayed either until the proletarian revolution ripens in Europe or until colonial revolutions come fully to a head, or, finally until the capitalist fight among themselves over the division of the colonies. Therefore, the maintenance of peaceful relations with capitalist countries is an obligatory task for us. The basis of our relations with capitalist countries consists in admitting the co-existence of the two opposed systems."
(Stalin - Speech to the 15th Congress of CPSU(b) - 1927)

d. During this period of "co-existence" Communist efforts must be directed toward two objectives:

(1) The security of the Soviet Orbit must be assured.

"The problem of consolidating the peace that had been won and of assuring the security of our native land is, at the present time, our most important problem."
(Military Thought - 1946)

(2) The economic development of the Soviet Orbit must be accelerated to surpass that of the capitalist world.

"In order to accomplish the great task [that of equaling and surpassing capitalist countries in economic development] we need a long period of peace and guarantees of the security of our country. The peaceful policy of the USSR was not just a passing phenomenon but proceeded from the vital interests and needs of the Soviet people."
(Molotov - "Election Speech" - 1946)

e. Soviet foreign policy during this period of "co-existence" has been outlined thus:

"The tasks of the Party in the sphere of foreign policy are: (1) Continue the policy of peace and strengthening business relations with all countries; (2) Be cautious and do not allow the country to be drawn into conflict with warmongers who are accustomed to have others draw chestnuts out of the fire for them; (3) Strengthening international bonds of friendship with working people of all countries who are interested in peace and friendship among nations."
(Stalin - "Report on Work of Central Committee to 18th Congress of CPSU(b)" - 1939)

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f. The period pending the ultimate collapse of capitalism will be characterized by the development of two major power centers -- a socialist power center based on the USSR and a capitalist power center based on the US. The final struggle for world domination will be decided in the eventual conflict between these two power centers.

"Thus in the course of further development of international revolution two centers will form on a world scale: a Socialist center, binding to itself the countries that gravitate to Socialism, and a capitalist center, binding to itself the countries that gravitate to capitalism. The struggle between these two centers for the possession of the world economy will decide the fate of capitalism and Communism in the whole world."
(Stalin - "Questions of Leninism" - 1932)

g. Revolutionary development within the broad pattern outlined above will not be uniform.

"The epoch of world revolution . . . is a whole strategic period, embracing a whole series of years and, I dare say, even a number of decades. In the course of this period there can and must be ebbings and flowings."
(Stalin - 1925)

2. A brief review of Soviet policy since World War II suggests that the foregoing principles have in general been faithfully adhered to by the Kremlin. In particular, the USSR has (a) concentrated on developing the defenses of the Soviet Orbit, and (b) has avoided excessive risks in pursuit of its foreign objectives.

3. During the post-war period efforts to consolidate the Soviet power position at home have in fact frequently been at the expense of foreign objectives. The USSR's internal security measures created serious mistrust abroad. Failure to demobilize the Soviet armed forces and continuing Soviet defense measures gave rise to grave doubts concerning Soviet intentions. The ruthless suppression of Satellite populations and the exploitation of Satellite economies caused alarm throughout the Western world. The failure of the Soviet Orbit to participate in the European Recovery Program added to Western suspicions. But the Kremlin went ahead with the isolation and consolidation of its domestic position, presumably well aware that in doing so it was jeopardizing its opportunities abroad.

4. Throughout this period the Kremlin has apparently taken care to avoid foreign ventures which might involve the Soviet Orbit in general

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war. Soviet forces, confronted with Western pressure, withdrew from Iran in 1946. The USSR refrained from rendering sufficient support to the Greek guerrillas to insure their success. It failed effectively to interfere with the Berlin airlift. And it has thus far avoided the use of military force to suppress the damaging defiance of Tito. Even in Korea the USSR has carefully avoided any form of intervention likely to involve it in direct conflict with UN forces.

5. Although by no means conclusive, the foregoing evidence reflects substantial consistency between Soviet words and deeds - "unity of theory and practice," as the Marxists put it - and it suggests that the Kremlin probably does not consider the present world situation historically appropriate for the final struggle with capitalism.

6. It seems more reasonable to infer from the foregoing that the Kremlin views the present world situation somewhat as follows:

a. World War II, like all wars, has left in its wake a number of unsettled and potentially revolutionary conditions;

b. As a result of Soviet efforts to exploit these conditions in Europe, the Western Powers have united to resist, and the revolutionary tide of Europe is beginning to ebb;

c. Revolutionary conditions in Asia have not yet reached the ebb stage, and invite continuing exploitation;

d. By exploiting these conditions in Asia, resistance to Communism may be weakened in Europe;

e. But even if the revolutionary tide should start to ebb in both Europe and Asia, there need be no alarm or despair. The stabilization of capitalism, even on a global basis, would be short-lived, and would be wholly consistent with the theories of the "ebb and flow" of revolutionary forces.

7. In estimating the present world situation the Kremlin is no doubt concerned primarily with the position of the US, which it sees as the dominant force of the capitalist "power center." Perhaps the most thoughtful analysis of this question is that by "Historicus" in Foreign Affairs for January, 1949, which concludes as follows:

"When Stalin looks to the more distant future, the United States, which has emerged from the last war more truly than ever the 'stronghold of capitalism,' probably continues to figure in

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his thinking as it has done in his basic writings since the mid-1920's -- as the center around which the capitalist system will form for the final war to the death between the two systems. Meanwhile, Stalin (Pravda, February 10, 1946) projects further industrial expansion in the Soviet Union on a scale which suggests, other factors aside, that the climactic struggle will not be risked before 15 or 20 years have elapsed. Stalin's theory of 'ebb and flow' would lead him to expect a new stabilization of capitalism within a few years, followed some years later by another wave of crisis and revolution generated by capitalism's inexorable contradictions. He apparently is timing completion of the Soviet base of operations for the crest of this next wave. Tactics of the moment may swing this way or that, but the Marxist doctrine to which he is committed is uncompromisingly revolutionary. In that doctrine, world Communism is the supreme aim, Soviet power the major instrument by which it will be achieved."

8. In the light of the foregoing, the following tentative conclusions are suggested:

a. Although the Kremlin considers tension and conflict with the capitalist countries to be inevitable, it will attempt to delay a general war by all possible means, will hope to prevent it by so undermining the capitalist states that they will not precipitate it, and will so develop Soviet strength as to insure a Soviet victory if war comes.

b. The Kremlin expects the operation of revolutionary forces to be uneven -- to be subject to the "ebbings and flowings" of the revolutionary tide -- and hence will not be dismayed by temporary setbacks;

c. Pending the development of conditions favorable to a Soviet victory in general war if it should occur, the Kremlin will concentrate on insuring the security of the Soviet Orbit against "capitalist intervention" and on developing the Orbit's economic potential to equal that of its adversaries. In anticipation of the final struggle the Kremlin will strive, by political, economic, and subversive means, and by limited military action, to extend the area of Communist control and to curtail that of capitalist control. But in doing so it will seek to avoid provoking general war under conditions which it considers premature.

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